Keeping in touch

News and notes from
the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

April 1995

Speakers At Atlanta General Conference

As the countdown for General Conference XVII in Atlanta continues, numerous exciting speakers have been slated. These speakers include Eric Rofes, Dr. Elizabeth Stuart and Dr. Randall Bailey. Eric Rofes is the author of *Reviving the Tribe: Regenerating Gay Men's Lives in the Face of the Ongoing Epidemic*. Mr. Rofes is the former Executive Director of the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center and San Francisco's Shanti Project. In addition, he is the founder of the Boston Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance.

Another compelling speaker who is scheduled is Dr. Elizabeth Stuart, author of *Just Good Friends: Towards a Lesbian and Gay Theology of Relationships* and editor of *Daring to Speak Love's Name: A Lesbian and Gay Prayerbook*. Currently she is a senior lecturer in Theology at the University of Glamorgan in Wales, United Kingdom.

Rounding out the list of speakers is Dr. Randall Bailey, Associate Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. Bailey is the author of *David in Love and War: The Pursuit of Power in 2 Samuel 10-12* and Co-Editor of *The Recovery of Blackness: An Interdisciplinary Exploration*.

In addition to these speakers, several special speakers sponsored by UFMCC programs will be featured at five luncheons and a breakfast. Tickets for most events will be sold at the Conference. The Women's Secretariat Luncheon on Monday, July 24th entitled "Speaking Our World: Hearing Stories from Global Sisters" will include women from various countries sharing their journeys. The Samaritan College Luncheon on Tuesday, July 26th will feature Dr. Robert Goss, author of *Jesus Acted Up: A Gay and Lesbian Manifesto*. The Department of People of Colors will hold a luncheon on Wednesday, July 26th with Mr. Phil Wilson, the Director of Public Policy at AIDS Project Los Angeles. Mr. Wilson was one of the founders of the Blacks Living with AIDS and HIV disease, the AIDS Prevention Team and the Gay Men of Color HIV Consortium. He has written many articles about living with HIV and has appeared on Larry King Live, ABC's Nightline and the Oprah Winfrey Show. Dr. James Curran, the Assistant Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service and Associate Director for HIV/AIDS at the U.S.

(see Speakers at GCXVII.., page 3)

Rev. Mel White is arrested.
Photo by Kathleen Vickery, Our Own, Inc.

Victory Follows Fast and Imprisonment

Three weeks of fasting in jail led to victory for UFMCC Minister of Justice Mel White when televangelist Rev. Pat Robertson met with him March 8 to discuss violence against gays and lesbians.

Rev. Robertson, founder of the Christian Broadcasting Network, also dropped trespassing charges against Rev. White stemming from a Feb. 15 prayer vigil at CBN headquarters in Virginia Beach, VA.

"This is a victory for everyone," Rev. White said. "Before today, Pat has never agreed to meet with gay or lesbian Christians. I'm hoping this is the beginning of constructive dialogue between us."

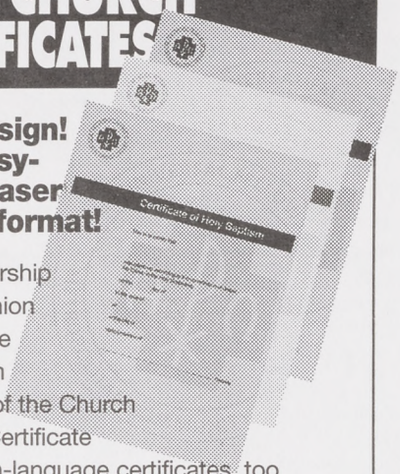
Rev. White was the ghostwriter of Rev. Robertson's 1986 presidential campaign book, *America's Date with Destiny*.

Noting that Rev. Robertson preached anti-gay rhetoric on CBN, Rev. White had vowed to fast in jail until Rev. Robertson met with him. During their five-minute meeting, Rev. White asked Rev. Robertson to publicly acknowledge the rise in hate crimes against lesbian and gay Americans, publicly condemn anyone who commits or incites these crimes, and to meet with parents of gay men and lesbians.

(see Rev. Mel White, page 3)

May God Bless you this Easter as we celebrate the resurrection of our Sovereign Jesus Christ!

NEW CHURCH CERTIFICATES



New design! New easy-to-use laser printer format!

- Membership
- Holy Union
- Marriage
- Baptism
- Friend of the Church
- Blank Certificate
- Spanish-language certificates, too
- And more!

.25 each

Order from UFMCC Resource Center Catalog or call 213/464-5100 Extension 226

New Book Features MCCers

Many MCC leaders are featured in *Equal Rites: Lesbian and Gay Worship, Ceremonies and Celebrations*, newly published by Westminster John Knox Press. The ecumenical collection is co-edited by Rev. Kittredge Cherry, UFMCC ecumenical and public relations field director, and Rev. Zalmon Sherwood, a gay Episcopal priest.

Three members of the UFMCC Board of Elders contributed to the book: Rev. Elder Troy Perry, with a Maundy Thursday service of footwashing and the liturgy from The Wedding, a demonstration for the rights of lesbian, gay and bi-couples; Rev. Elder Darlene Garner, with a service of holy union based upon the tradition of Kwanzaa, and Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, with a hymnal blessing.

Other MCC contributions are: Rev. Stephen Moore, a baptismal liturgy celebrating the feminine divine; Ms. Sylvia Perez, liturgies for creating community and an "earth communion"; Rev. Stephen Pieters with rites of healing and memorial; Rev. Paul Tucker, litany for the AIDS crisis; Rev. Steve Carson, motorcycle blessing; Rev. Lou Kavar, Father's Day service; Rev. Colleen Darraugh, litanies of justice and affirmation; and a celebration of lesbian and gay pride by Revs. Michael Piazza, Carol West and Paul Tucker. In addition to editing the book, Rev. Cherry contributed an animal blessing and, with Mr. Nathan Meckley, a lesbian/gay pride service in the Taize style.

Equal Rites is available from the UFMCC Resource Center for $12.99 plus shipping and handling. To order, call (213) 464-5100, ext. 226. ❐

UFMCC Designates Travel Company for 1997 General Conference

After months of discussion and review of proposals from several U.S. and Australian travel companies, the UFMCC has designated *Above and Beyond Travel* in conjunction with *Destination Down Under* as the preferred travel company for the 1997 General Conference to Sydney, Australia.

Travelling overseas can be expensive and many of our Conference delegates may not be experienced in international travel. For these reasons, staff has been exploring the best options for cost-effective and convenient travel arrangements in order to aid our local church members planning to go to Australia. Designating an agency at this time will enable negotiating the lowest rates possible, and encouraging travel through a preferred company (as has been done for previous Conferences) will enable the best savings overall, both individually and collectively. The goal is to assure that MCC'ers world-wide can make one phone call to arrange every aspect of their trip to Australia at a price that will be hard to beat. This will include all air transportation, different ranges of hotel lodging, visa processing, and other travel details.

Negotiations for the Conference travel package are underway. The basic package will be round-trip airfare, hotel lodging, Sydney area transport pass, and other features to be included. Additional features ranging from local tours and social events to trips to other locations in the South Pacific can be added on to any individual package. More information about costs and specific features will be included with an Australia report in the 1995 General Conference pre-conference packet.

(see 1997 Travel Package, page 4)

Advertise in GCXVII Book

Want to advertise in a publication with worldwide distribution? The Program Booklet for General Conference XVII in Atlanta promises to have the widest distribution to date.

Advertising space is going fast. To date the Back Cover, Inside Back Cover and Inside Front Cover have already been sold. The advertising rates for the space left are as follows:

Full Page	$125.00 (7-1/2" wide x 9-3/4" tall)
Half Page	75.00 (7-1/2" wide x 5-1/4" tall)
Quarter Page	50.00 (3-11/16" wide x 4-3/4" tall)
Business Card	25.00 (3-11/16" wide x 2-15/16" tall)

Measurements indicated above must include the border. Your check for the full amount along with a TYPESET/CAMERA READY ad must be received by JUNE 2, 1995. Please, include your name and the name of your organization along with your address, phone number and the size of the ad you would like. We cannot return original ads after publication. Mail the ad and your check to Dana Cagle - GCXVII Ad, c/o UFMCC, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029. Become a part of the memories with an advertisement or just a congratulatory note. ❐

THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES

Keeping in Touch is a monthly publication of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We are a church of the lesbian and gay community, open to all. Our mission is to call people to new life through the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, confront injustice through Christian social action, and create a community of healing and reconciliation.

Keeping in Touch may be freely copied for distribution in UFMCC. Portions may be reprinted in UFMCC church publications, with attribution. For other distribution, please request permission. Subscriptions are free upon request.

Send address changes, news and ideas to: *Keeping in Touch*, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd, #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029; (213) 464-5100.

Editorial Board:
Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry, Moderator
Mr. Ravi Verma, Director of Administration
Rev. Kittredge Cherry, Editor

Deadline for each issue: 15th of previous month.

Ms. Nancy Fackrell, Typesetting

MCCers Hold Online Chat

MCC members have begun meeting and greeting each other via computer every Thursday evening since July 1994.

The "MCC Chat Room" is accessible to anyone who is a member of America Online, one of the major U.S. online computer services.

The chat room was started by Mr. Bill Dailey, lay delegate of MCC of the Vineyard, Fresno, CA, and Mr. Don Clothier, director of music ministries at New Horizons MCC, Oklahoma City, OK, after they met via an online discussion for gay Christians. It recently reached the status of an official America Online forum.

The MCC Chat Room is open from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Eastern time every Thursday. To reach it, go to the Gay and Lesbian Community Forum of America Online, and click on the Lambda Lounge icon. The room holds 48 people. It is currently moderated by Mr. Clother, whose online address is DonC448@aol.com. After 9 p.m., discussion continues in a member room.

"The room has come to mean a great deal to a lot of people," Mr. Clothier said. "For example, we've had a 15-year-old boy who says that the chat room is the only place he's gotten any kind of support. He's in a small town, with non-understanding parents and a fundamentalist church that preaches hate and damnation."

The chat room is a means of evangelism. After people in the room explained that MCC was founded by and for gays and lesbians, one recent newcomer gave a typical response: "Wow, what rock have I been under? Or what closet have I been in?"

Some people have found romance in the MCC Chat Room. An Oklahoma City man wanted to attend MCC, couldn't find it in the phone book, stumbled across the MCC Chat Room, came to church, and fell in love with the man who invited him. ❐

Pastor Asked to Serve in Legislature

With the approval of 97% of his congregation and after a one-hour meeting at the invitation of the Premier of Ontario, Canada, Rev. Brent Hawkes of MCC Toronto has announced he will be a candidate in the province's provincial election expected in May or June of 1995.

Rev. Hawkes said he will seek the nomination to run as a candidate for the New Democratic Party, which in 1994 introduced spousal rights protection legislation but allowed members of its party a free-vote. The bill died when other political parties backed down on earlier promises, including the Liberal party which had won a by-election victory in the Toronto riding of St. George-St. David by promising equal rights protection, then flip-flopping.

The riding has the largest lesbian and gay population in Canada but includes some of the country's richest and poorest residents. Rev. Hawkes has already insisted he won't be a single-issue candidate and has developed strong positions on public safety, education, housing, justice, transportation, job-creation and many others.

After MCC Toronto's February 26 church service, Rev. Hawkes removed his vestments to make his announcement. He said it would be the last time the campaign would be discussed in the church sanctuary and outlined comprehensive strategies to establish an Ethics Advisory Committee, chaired by a board member to deal with any issue that might arise between Brent's role as Pastor and as political candidate. Rev. Hawkes received a standing ovation.

Rev. Hawkes said he will continue to serve as senior Pastor, whatever the election outcome. "The Board will be examining whether to hire additional staff using funds from my salary, if elected," he said in his statement to the congregation.

Dozens of church members have already signed up to volunteer for the campaign, which will occur when the election is called.

Buy many non-gay community leaders have expressed their support and are providing assistance to the campaign to Elect Rev. Brent Hawkes. Stay posted for what could be history in the making.

UFMCC Founder, Rev. Troy Perry calls the announcement, "a dream come true. All my life I've dreamed of the day an MCC clergyperson would take their seat in the legislatures of government. This is truly a miracle." ❐

Rev. Mel White

(continued from page 1)

At the meeting, Rev. Robertson gave Rev. White a letter saying, "I have never, nor will I, counsel others to commit acts of violence against you or any other homosexual."

Rev. Robertson's future broadcasts and publications will be monitored by Bearing Witness, an interfaith group of gays, lesbians and their allies who organized to support Rev. White's fast and maintain the daily vigil at CBN. Ms. Dawn Rankin-Phelps, a Bearing Witness organizer, said Rev. White and his support team received 12,000 letters of support from around the United States. ❐

Justice Prevails in Florida, Too

Led by UFMCC Minister of Justice Mel White, nearly 1,000 people protested homophobic theology at the "Reclaiming America for Christ" national rally in Ft. Lauderdale, FL March 18.

Rev. White discussed the need for tolerance and peaceful co-existence in a private meeting with the leader of that rally, Rev. James Kennedy. Rev. Kennedy is senior minister of Ft. Lauderdale's Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church and has a worldwide televised broadcast ministry. Rev. White worked directly with him to produce the popular 1969 religious film "Like a Mighty Army," which helped propel Rev. Kennedy to national prominence.

Rev. Kennedy initially said he would not meet with Rev. White until after the rally, which drew 700 people from across the United States. However, when the two encountered each other after the opening session, Rev. Kennedy invited Rev. White into a side room where they remained for 30 minutes. Rev. White told reporters that the evangelist, though polite, firmly condemned homosexuality.

On the following day, protestors demonstrated outside the conference with signs saying, "Stop the lie," "Hate is not a family value" and "We are all God's children." ❐

Speakers at GCXVII... *(continued from page 1)*

Centers for Disease Control will be speaking at the AIDS Ministry Luncheon on Thursday, July 27th. Rev. Paul Sherry, President of the United Church of Christ will be speaking at the Ecumenical Witness and Ministry Luncheon on Friday, July 28th. Finishing out the week will be Rev. Mel White speaking at the Ministry of Justice Breakfast on Saturday, July 29th. With such an exciting speaker schedule this Conference proves to be the best yet! Over 650 people have already registered for Conference - send your registration in today! ❐

1997 Travel Package

(continued from page 2)

Above and Beyond Travel and *Destination Down Under* are both committed to assuring the success of General Conference in Sydney. *Above and Beyond* is a full-service travel agency based in San Francisco, gay and lesbian owned, which specializes in travel to Australia and the South Pacific. *Destination Down Under* is the premier Australian gay/lesbian inbound tour operation and is based in Sydney. Their combination of resources brings a wealth of experience and expertise for coordination of UFMCC travel to Australia. Look for their booth in the Resource Expo at General Conference in Atlanta! ❐

MCC in Buenos Aires, Argentina, has asked Amnesty International to assist in gaining legal status. Pictured here at a recent demonstration opposing violence against homosexuals are, from left, Prof. Carlos Jaurequi; Dr. Fabian Salvioli, president of Amnesty International; Rev. Roberto Gonzalez, pastor, ICM Buenos Aires; and Mr. Marcelo Ferreyra.

Views Differ on Holy Unions

This excerpt from "Lesbian and Gay Marriage: Private Commitments, Public Ceremonies," edited by Ms. Suzanne Sherman (Temple University Press), contrasts the personal viewpoint of Rev. Dee Dale on holy union ceremonies. Rev. Dale is pastor of MCC Louisville, KY. She believes her holy union was important to her eight-year relationship with Ms. Judy Dale, Great Lakes District Coordinator.

Judy and I had our holy union ceremony in 1989. It was important as a public statement of my commitment with her. But is was also important that I receive public support and that our relationship receive that support to help us. And our church does that. We tried hard to make it clear that not only was [the ceremony] proclaiming our love for one another, it was also dedicating our relationship to God's service. The music we picked was not real traditional wedding music. There were songs like "I See Jesus in You." I wore a tux and Judy had a beautiful dress made with some of the lace from her original wedding gown. She'd been married heterosexually for 14 years. This time, she says, she knew it was right.

My mother walked down the aisle with me and a good friend of ours walked with Judy. A best friend of more than 20 years came and stood up with us. It was open to the whole community. About a quarter were straight. There were two or three nuns that I've worked with, and other people I've worked with. We had about 120 people there. We celebrated communion, and then opened up communion to everyone. It was so wonderful to see our straight friends come forward and celebrate communion in our church.

We wear rings on the left hand, on our ring finger. And we were open with the jeweler when we went to buy them. We're "out" in public. We call each other "spouse." In fact, I've become so used to it now, it just comes natural.

Judy decided she wanted to have the same name as me, so she went to probate court and had it officially changed. But nothing else really changed because of the ceremony. Everything we own is in both our names. All our money is one pot. We have wills and powers of attorney.

I think [legalized] marriage would just be one more step of civil rights. It's not asking for anything anybody else doesn't have. More and more, people are starting to realize that relationships are condoned by God in more ways than one. They are beginning to see that people are not condemned for the way that they love, but for the ways they don't love. ❐

Australian Re-Elected!

Rev. Greg Smith was re-elected to a four-year term as the Australian District Coordinator at the recent district conference. ❐

In Memory

Ms. Buff Fischer

Ms. Buff Fischer, former UFMCC clergy and founding pastor of MCC Buffalo, NY, died Feb. 4 in Buffalo of complications of gall bladder surgery. She served as student clergy at MCC Los Angeles, CA in the 1970s.

Rev. Joan Johnson

Rev. Joan G. Johnson, former UFMCC clergy, died March 4 of congestive heart failure. She was 69.

Rev. Johnson served as student clergy at MCC Los Angeles, CA, in the 1970s, then pastored MCC Minneapolis, MN in the late 1970s. She was a pioneer in efforts to start a 12-step recovery program ministry in MCC. After that, she pastored an independent church. At the time of her death, she was retired and living in Crestline, CA. Services were held March 18 in San Bernardino, CA.

Mr. Donald Jones

Mr. Donald Jones died March 11 at home in Sarasota, FL, with his partner, Rev. T. Edward Helms, after a long fight with AIDS.

Mr. Jones was active in Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota, FL, where Rev. Helms is pastor. He had also been active at First MCC of Kansas, Wichita, KS.

A funeral was held March 12 at Church of the Trinity MCC in Sarasota, and burial was March 15 in Mr. Jones' hometown, Colby, KS.

Freedom Ride to Mississippi

The Board of Elders endorsed the Freedom Ride to Mississippi being held Memorial Day Weekend (May 26-29, 1995). A mailing has been sent to each church. Rev. Elder Troy Perry andRev. Elder Nancy Wilson will be there.

If you are interested in joining this historic weekend to seek justice for our sisters, Wanda Henson and Cheri Michael with Rev. Perry and Robin Tyler at Camp Sisterspirit in Ovett, MS, please contact, Frank Zerilli, c/o UFMCC Headquarters, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029, Attn: Camp Sisterspirit, or call (213) 464-5100 ext. 212. ❐

Around The Fellowship

Praises

Thanks be to God for a very successful **UFMCC General Council** meeting in March.

Twenty-four churches have requested consideration as target churches of the **Strategic Growth Initiative**, a plan from the Board of Elders for UFMCC to double in size, reports **Rev. Elder Don Eastman**, UFMCC treasurer.

We Know Where You Live by **Ms. Jean Taylor,** member of **MCC San Francisco**, CA, was published recently by Seal Press. It is a murder mystery set in San Francisco's lesbian/gay community.

MCC Melbourne, Australia, hosted its second annual **Leather Pride Service** Feb. 19, featuring members of the leather community as worship leaders.

Revs. Polly Ireland and **Carol Couch, MCC Chattanooga**, TN, have adopted a baby girl.

MCC Long Beach, CA hosted another successful **Charismatic Conference** in February, with 90 people pre-registered.

Mr. Rick Peterson of **Good Shepherd Parish/Christ the Redeemer MCC**, Chicago, IL, was elected to the board of the Chicago Theological Seminary.

Rev. Kenneth Pilot, pastor of **MCC Living Faith**, St. Louis, MO, was appointed chair of the AIDS Task Force at St. Louis Community College.

Prayers

Rev. Caroline Blanco, pastor of **MCC Centre de l'Esprit Liberateur,** Paris, France, is recovering from open heart surgery on March 10.

Mr. James Tallent, deacon in **MCC Knoxville**, TN, is one of five plaintiffs challenging the constitutionality of the Tennessee Sodomy Statute.

Transitions

Mr. Farley Peterson, UFMCC administrative assistant for financial affairs, announced that he will leave the Fellowship staff, where he has worked since 1986, and relocate to the Midwest.

Rev. Nancy Horvath was elected pastor of **Family of Faith MCC**, Jenks, OK.

Rev. Ed Perry was installed as pastor of **Divine Redeemer MCC**, Glendale, CA.

Rev. Woodie White was elected pastor of **MCC Illiamo**, Quincy, IL.

Rev. Fred Williams was installed as pastor of **MCC Albuquerque**, NM.

Rev. Marianne McPherson was elected pastor of **MCC Huntsville**, AL.

Rev. Robert McDill was installed as pastor of **MCC in the Valley**, N. Hollywood, CA.

Rev. Carol Wier is the new pastor of **New Life MCC** of Hampton Roads, Norfolk, VA.

Mr. Ronnie Helms was appointed interim pastor of **Vision of Hope MCC**, Mountville, PA.

Ms. Judy Goodwin is the new interim pastor of **MCC of the Blue Ridge**, Roanoke, VA.

The following pastors resigned recently: **Rev. Charlie Arehart, MCC of the Rockies,** Denver, CO; **Rev. Julie Daley, MCC Adelaide,** Australia; **Rev. Lin Stoner, Redeemer MCC,** Flint, MI; and **Rev. John Loppnow, MCC Manhattan**, KS.

Correction

Rev. Liz Leech resigned from MCC Columbus, GA; the wrong state was given in the March issue.

Top 20 Tithes - Feb. 1995

1.	Cathedral of Hope MCC, Dallas, TX	US $	6,341.46
2.	MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX		2,824.68
3.	Sunshine Cathedral MCC, Ft. Lauderdale, FL		2,779.24
4.	MCC Toronto, Ontario, Canada	CAN$	1,953.15
5.	MCC of the Rockies, Denver, CO		1,628.78
6.	St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville, FL		1,481.11
7.	MCC Los Angeles, Culver City, CA		1,377.18
8.	MCC Long Beach, Long Beach, CA		1,134.11
9.	MCC New York, New York City, NY		1,125.41
10.	MCC San Francisco, San Francisco, CA		1,118.85
11.	MCC Washington, Washington, DC		1,103.68
12.	Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston, TX		1,082.05
13.	Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota, FL		1,051.18
14.	Joy MCC, Orlando, FL		1,012.99
15.	MCC Richmond, Richmond, VA		967.44
16.	Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton, FL		951.70
17.	MCC Key West, Key West, FL		824.61
18.	Holy Covenant MCC, Hinsdale, IL		812.51
19.	Gentle Shepherd MCC, Phoenix, AZ		763.12
20.	River City MCC, Sacramento, CA		739.46

{These figures reflect the 10 percent of each local church's monthly income that is reported to Fellowship headquarters.}

Top 20 Per Capita - Feb. 1995

1.	Muskegon MCC, Muskegon, MI	US $	49.71
2.	MCC Ocean of Life, Costa Mesa, CA		43.50
3.	Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston, TX		43.28
4.	SisterSpirit, Portland, OR		36.60
5.	Holy Covenant MCC, Hinsdale, IL		33.03
6.	Open Arms MCC, Rochester, NY		31.90
7.	MCC of the Pomona Valley, Claremont, CA		28.48
8.	MCC of Greater Hayward, San Lorenzo, CA		28.18
9.	Faith Eternal MCC, Springfield, IL		24.26
10.	River of Life MCC, Richland, WA		23.71
11.	New Life MCC, Charlotte, NC		22.89
12.	MCC New York, New York City, NY		22.64
13.	Christ the Liberator MCC, New Brunswick, NJ		22.18
14.	MCC Johnson County, Shawnee, KS		21.73
15.	MCC Myrtle Beach, Myrtle Beach, FL		21.67
16.	MCC Los Angeles, Culver City, CA		21.65
17.	Church of the Holy Spirit MCC, Des Moines, IA		21.57
18.	St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville, FL		21.50
19.	Harvest MCC, Denton, TX		20.70
20.	MCC Family in Christ, Ft. Collins, CO		20.58

{These figures reflect the average individual weekly offerings to the local church.}

General Council Update

The March 1995 General Council meeting was a watershed meeting for the UFMCC.

Set in the framework of a new system, the council worked at the direction of a Core Team. This group, named by the moderator, consists of Rev. Elder Darlene Garner, Rev. Arlene Ackerman, Ms. Judy Dale, and Rev. Troy Perry. The Core Team developed a meeting construct which allowed for business to occur in several different venues. Groups of people worked in Strategy Teams to discuss issues which then came to the plenary group for action and/or discussion. There were a number of forums arranged to discuss the major issues the Council needed to review prior to the General Conference. These issues included the CCCC Proposal, the ETFSS Report and a discussion of the 1997 General Conference scheduled to be held in Australia. A Budget Forum was devised to process fiduciary concerns and goals prior to the ultimate development of the budget which will be presented to the General Conference in July. There was also opportunity for "Skills Building" where a presentation was offered by Mr. Clarke Friesen, Rev. Jay Neely, and Rev. Elder Don Eastman regarding Bylaws rulings and a general overview of advisories submitted by the Corporate and Legal Maintenance. Two time slots were made available for "Topic Discussion" to address any relevant and pertinent issues which came up during the Council meeting. Worship and devotional time was part of the daily schedule.

The Corporate and Legal Maintenance Team (C&L), and The Program and Budget Maintenance Team (P&B) continued to meet throughout this meeting. The Moderator made a few new appointments: The C&L will be chaired by the Rev. Jay Neely. This Council meeting was the last meeting for Mr. Clarke Friesen, who steps down from his position as the South Central District Coordinator after serving with excellence and faithfulness for the past 13 years.

The Elder's Task Force on Structures and Systems (ETFSS) document was presented by the Board of Elders in it's 5th draft. Rev. Wendy Foxworth, chair of the ETFSS was present in Los Angeles throughout the entire Council meeting and worked closely with the Board of Elders and the Council throughout this time. With input from the council and lively discussion it was finalized in it's 6th draft. The Clergy Credentials and Concerns Committee (CCCC) document was finalized and presented to the Council for review at this Council meeting. The five-member Executive Committee of the CCCC, Rev. Michael Piazza, chair, and Revs. Pat Bumgardner, Sue Maybe, Charlotte Strayhorn, and Steve Torrence worked diligently in Los Angeles at the same time the Council was meeting and reported to the Council on two different occasions. The CCCC also met in prior meetings with the Board of Elders and the District Coordinators.

Some other Council highlights included: The Council affirmed the previous decision of the General Conference to hold the 1997 Conference in Sydney, Australia. The Council approved the merger process and timeline between the Western Canadian District and Mid-Central District.

Board of Elders Highlights

Rev. Don Eastman reports that 24 churches have asked to participate as target churches for the Strategic Growth Initiative (SGI). The Board of Elders (BOE) appointed Rev. Arlene Ackerman, Rev. Frankye White, Rev. Brent Hawkes, Rev. Hong Tan, Rev. Sandi Robinson and Rev. Michael Piazza to serve as members of the SGI Team. The first meeting of the SGI Team will be in July, 1995.

Rev. Perry announced the appointment of Rev. Mel White to serve as the UFMCC representative to Interfaith Impact for Justice and Peace.

The BOE met with Rev. Ed Paul as he returned home from a successful three month stay with our church in the Philippines. Rev. Paul was authorized to seek out a new Pastoral Leader with the resignation of Rev. Mickley at the end of July. He has named Mr. Edgar Mendoza to serve as Lay Pastoral Leader. They acknowledged his fine ministry and are very pleased with what he was able to accomplish during this time. Due to the gracious gift given in the name of Crayne Cam, Mr. Paul Steindal has designated money to fund two Filipinos to attend General Conference.

Rev. Judy Dahl, the WCE Administrator invited Dr. Kabakov from Moscow to meet with the Board of Elders.

Rev. Steve Torrence joined in for the discussion of the recent trip to the Dominican Republic and was acknowledged for the high quality of his service to this ministry.

Two trips were placed in preliminary planning phases: one trip to Nigeria to be headed up by Mr. Bernie Barbour. It is the desire of the Administrator and BOE to seek out a qualified medical professional to accompany Mr. Barbour to Nigeria on a trip this calendar year. A trip to Nicaragua will also take place this calendar year with the Rev. Judy Dahl and the Rev. Jorge Sosa, Latin American Ministries Area Coordinator. A September date is pending.

World Community Builders (WCB) just returned from a week long building camp in the Dominican Republic and are planning another camp in Mexico this summer.

The Administrator of WCE submitted a request which was approved by the Board of Elders to change the name of WCE to Ministry of Global Outreach. This will come before the entire denomination for consideration as a Bylaw change. ❐

Classifieds

TO PLACE AN AD

Cost is $15 for the first 25 words or less. Additional words are 70 cents per word. Numbers and abbreviations count as words. All classifieds must be prepaid in U.S. funds. All copy for Keeping in Touch Classified Advertising is subject to the approval of the Editorial Board. Appearance of advertising does not imply, nor does it constitute, endorsement by UFMCC. Mail ads to: Keeping in Touch Classifieds, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029.

BOOKS & PUBLICATIONS

FINAL CALL FOR SERMONS! GLBT PASTORS URGED TO SUBMIT SERMONS for an anthology - Boldly Into Holy Places - by/for our community. Deadline: April 30. Dennis Swinford, Editor, Box 1791, Kent, OH 44240.

FREE! UFMCC Resource Catalog - The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is offering the new RESOURCE CENTER CATALOG, featuring new Books by MCC authors; materials for Gay and Lesbian Christians! Contact: UFMCC Catalog, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029; or call (213) 464-5100; fax (213) 464-2123.

MERCHANDISE

RAINBOW GIFTS. Flags, Pins, Windsocks, Bumper Stickers, Umbrellas, and More. Free Flyer. Call toll-free 1-800-774-FLAG. Flag & Banner Co., 543 Dumaine, New Orleans, LA 70116.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

MCC Eugene, Oregon's oldest MCC, is searching for a half-time pastor. If you love the outdoors, beautiful waterways, and a bustling liberal college-town atmosphere, we have a position for you. We are a growing congregation with a strong lay leadership. For an application packet, write to Ross Sutherland, Search Committee Secretary, PO Box 10987, Eugene, OR 97440-2987.

Reconciliation MCC of Grand Rapids, MI is seeking full-time Pastor, replies kept confidential, contact: Pastoral Search Committee, c/o 64 - 34th St. S.W., Wyoming, MI 49548.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Pride, Love, and Union Services is a Gay owned and operated company that assists Lesbian and Gay couples in planning their Commitment Ceremony or Holy Union. We do this by providing essential information in our beautiful ceremony guide. For detailed information, please call or write: P.L.U.S., P.O. Box 283, Wookstock, VT 05091. Ph: 603.448.3754; Fax: 603.448.4076; E-Mail: Gaywed@aol.com.